

THE LOVER'S GRAMMAR & COMPOSITION HANDBOOK

First of all, if you wish to write full-length books, you should be married to your work -- although a few introductory chapters are often sufficient affairs to sound out probable conflicts. Episodic narratives are sometimes interesting; however, one-sentence paragraphs may or may not be acceptable, depending upon their periodic or non-periodic functions.

Of course, it barely needs mentioning that any liason with paper requires pencils which are sharp and pens well-supplied with ink. Or, if you type, you must raise your key pressure quite high, in order to make the hardest and clearest impressions possible.

As to the quality of the paper, that is your own business. Nevertheless, you should choose wisely with regard to weight, rag content, whether it is lined or unlined, bonded or unbonded, etcetera. Also, you need to look closely to ascertain which side is the better one to write on. And it occasionally matters whether you begin at the bottom or at the top of the sheets.

And now, for those among you who feel more comfortable with plain talk, please turn the page.

-- Clyde Fixmer

Pentwater, MI

NAMES

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
hated the name
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
with such a passion
that he made a nickname
out of his initials and
liked to be called S.T.C.

S.T.C. -- it could be something
you pour in a crankcase
or a pill that makes you hallucinate.

He especially abhorred his first name,
Samuel: it was, S.T.C. maintained,

the worst combination that
vowels and consonants
had ever been susceptible of.

One night during the Romantic Movement
S.T.C. carried his howling baby son
outside into the orchard
to show him the full moon;

S.T.C. watched the baby's quiet face
and the moon reflect each other
like circular mirrors
and he held up the weightless life
of his son's blue, watery head
and forgot about his awful name.

His son's name was Hartley,
after a philosopher.
His wife's name was Sara.
His mistress's name was Sarah, too.
His partner's name was William

which is also my name
which I never much cared for.
William: it sounds like the name
of a king or an A student.

SILVER DOLLARS

My great grandfather
was the man who held

queens
over fours

in the hand
that Wild Bill Hickock
had the now dreaded
aces and eights.

It turned out to be
the second best hand
(nobody else had shit)

so he took the pot,
Wild Bill having been shot
in the back
by a runt.